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## APPENDIX B

# SEATTLE'S EMS SYSTEM

The model described in Chapter 1 of this plan remains the basic organizational design for the Seattle EMS system. The Seattle EMS system is administratively simpler than the system in the rest of the county, because it serves only one jurisdiction. In Seattle, Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS) are both administered and operated by the Seattle Fire Department.

Seattle's population is 536,000 and its employment is 470,000. Because more people commute into Seattle to work than commute from Seattle to work elsewhere, the typical workday population of Seattle grows to approximately 700,000. In 1996, the Seattle Fire Department responded to more than 54,000 aid calls, of which more than 19,000 were ALS calls. EMS calls were approximately 75% of the total alarms to which the Fire Department responded, and EMS responses accounted for more than 40% of the total time the Fire Department spent responding to emergencies.

The Fire Department responds to these calls with 6 aid BLS units, 33 engine companies, 11 ladder companies, and 6 ALS paramedic units. The engine and ladder companies, aid units, and four of the paramedic units are distributed in 33 fire stations throughout the city. The other two paramedic units are stationed at Harborview Medical Center. These companies and units are staffed by 196 on-duty positions, filled by more than 920 EMT-firefighters and paramedics. Medi-

cal control, quality assurance, training, and certification for paramedics are provided by Harborview Medical Center and the University of Washington School of Medicine. The Fire Department provides ALS transport, and private ambulances provide BLS transport.

The Fire Department is entirely supported by the City's General Fund. In 1997, the EMS levy will generate \$10.4 million in Seattle, as revenue to the General Fund. If the levy rate is increased to \$.295 per \$1000 of assessed value, it should generate \$13.1 million in 1998. The endorsed 1998 budget for the Fire Department is \$80.5 million. The endorsed 1998 budget for the Operations Division of the Fire Department, whose primary mission is emergency response for fire suppression and EMS, is \$69.0 million. The endorsed 1998 budget for the Administration Division, which provides communications, training, and support for the Department, is \$7.7 million.

In the last three decades, the Seattle EMS system has become a model for jurisdictions nationwide, as well as for King County. It also unquestionably has become a core municipal service. In a 1996 survey, Seattle residents identified EMS as the City service with which they are most satisfied, giving it an average rating of 6.2 on a 7-point scale. Seattle residents also identified EMS as the most important City service, ahead of such traditional municipal services as fire pro-



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tection, water supply, policing, garbage removal, libraries, traffic management, and street maintenance.

Seattle has been happy to participate in the County EMS planning effort. Some of the future challenges the plan identifies and the strategic initiatives it calls for apply to Seattle as well as to the rest of the county. We look forward to working with other jurisdictions on reducing growth in EMS demand, finding ways to use existing resources more efficiently, and adapting programs to changes in community needs.